



# Montgomery County Council

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*For Immediate Release*

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March 5, 2012

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## **Councilmember Ervin, School Board President Brandman, Superintendent Starr, Police Chief Manger to Discuss Benefits of School Bus Safety Cameras**

*On Tuesday, March 6, in Rockville, They Will Join in to  
Support Council's Passage of Bill to Help Prevent Violators*

ROCKVILLE, Md., March 5, 2012—Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin, Board of Education President Shirley Brandman, Superintendent of Schools Joshua Starr and Police Chief Thomas Manger will be among those joining together at 12 noon on Tuesday, March 6, to stress the importance of Bill 37-11 that the Council is expected to approve later that day. The bill would authorize installation of cameras on County school buses to monitor vehicles that illegally pass stopped buses.

They will join together in front of a County school bus in the loading dock area of the Council Office at 100 Maryland Ave. in Rockville. Bob Herron and Michael White, two MCPS bus drivers, also are scheduled to speak at the event. The loading dock is in the rear of the building, near the first floor of the building's parking deck.

Councilmember Ervin is the chief sponsor of the bill, which has unanimous support of the Council. Council President Roger Berliner, Vice President Nancy Navarro and Councilmembers Phil Andrews, Marc Elrich, Nancy Floreen, George Leventhal, Craig Rice and Hans Riemer are co-sponsors. The bill was the subject of a public hearing on Jan. 24.

Bill 37-11 would authorize the County's Chief of Police, after consulting with the Board of Education, to install cameras on Montgomery County Public School buses

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to monitor traffic. In a Nov. 22 memo to the Board of Education, Councilmember Ervin asked the board to support the bill.

“The goal of this legislation is to change the behavior of drivers who currently ignore traffic laws intended to keep our students safe while traveling on school buses,” wrote Councilmember Ervin. “As the Council’s representative on the County’s Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, I am sponsoring this bill because I believe it is a natural outgrowth of our Pedestrian Safety Initiative and our Safe Routes to School program.”

The bill would implement Maryland State Senate Bill 679, which was passed by the 2011 General Assembly and allowed for the installation of cameras on the outside of County school buses. Drivers caught on tape illegally passing a stopped school bus would be subject to a maximum civil fine of \$250. If a school bus driver can personally identify a violator, a conviction could lead to a misdemeanor carrying a fine of up to \$1,000 and three points may be assessed to a driver’s license.

“I appreciate the continued partnership of the County Council in helping us keep our students safe throughout the school day,” said Superintendent of Schools Starr. “Our school buses travel 100,000 miles a day and student safety is the top priority of our bus drivers and transportation staff. It is my hope that this legislation will provide additional incentive for drivers to stop and give our students the opportunity to get on and off the school bus safely.”

A Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) survey released in March 2011 reported that in a single day in February, 7,028 drivers overtook stopped buses in Maryland. The report stated 56.9 percent of the violators were oncoming vehicles passing the bus from the opposite direction; 37.9 percent passed the bus from behind on the driver’s side; and 5.2 percent passed the bus of the side of the bus passenger door. The survey was coordinated by MSDE along with transportation directors in all 24 County school systems. Approximately 65 percent (more than 4,700) of all bus drivers statewide participated in the survey.

“One-hundred-thousand kids ride a bus to school in Montgomery County,” said Police Chief Manger. “Anything that we can do to keep them safe is a worthwhile endeavor.”

“My fellow bus drivers and I fought hard to see this law enacted,” said bus driver Bob Herron. “We see violations on a daily basis and our main concern was making sure that the students are able to safely travel to and from school.”

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